



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media Information 202 / 418-0500
Fax-On-Demand 202 / 418-2830
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
<ftp.fcc.gov>

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

Report No. IN 98-42

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

July 31, 1998

**U.S. AND MEXICO REACH AGREEMENT
FOR IMPLEMENTING DIGITAL TELEVISION SERVICE
ALONG THE U.S./MEXICO BORDER, APPROVING ALL STATIONS
SLATED TO BEGIN SERVICE IN NOVEMBER 1998 AND MAY 1999**

The FCC and Mexico's Secretariat of Communications and Transportation (SCT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes procedures for implementing digital television (DTV) service along the United States/Mexico border and approves all five DTV stations in the U.S./Mexico border area slated to begin service in November 1998 and May 1999.

The MOU was signed by FCC Chairman William E. Kennard and SCT Undersecretary of Communications Jorge Nicolin. As stated by Chairman Kennard, "this MOU represents a major step forward in the cooperative efforts of Mexico and the U.S. to bring the benefits of DTV to consumers quickly, and clears the way for the imminent roll-out of DTV in the Top 10 U.S. markets."

The MOU provides an expedited notification process through which most authorized DTV stations can begin operation within 15 days of notification to the other country. In addition, the MOU specifies that no further notification is needed for the five U.S. television stations in Los Angeles which have voluntarily committed to begin DTV operation by November 1, 1998, or which are required to begin DTV operations by May 1, 1999. The FCC has required stations affiliated with ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC to build their digital facilities in the 10 largest television markets by May 1, 1999. In addition, 24 stations in the Top 10 markets have committed to begin operations by November 1, 1998. Los Angeles is the only Top 10 market located within the U.S./Mexico border zone.

"This MOU, in conjunction with recent notification approvals from Canada, means that the 42 U.S. television stations in the Top 10 markets that are expected to begin DTV operations in the next three to nine months can do so without having to wait for further approval from either Mexico or Canada," added Chairman Kennard.

(over)

The MOU, which covers DTV operations in the area extending 275 kilometers on either side of the U.S./Mexico common border, contains the following major provisions:

1. A list of mutually acceptable second channel DTV allotments for each country.
2. Procedures to be used for notifying each administration of plans to implement DTV service relative to an allotment.
3. The methods to be used by each administration in evaluating the acceptability of proposed DTV facilities.

The first part of the MOU describes the procedures for notifying DTV facilities that are intended to be brought into service, along with tables listing distance separation requirements where DTV facilities are involved. The MOU appendices contain: (1) lists of NTSC channel allotments and second channel DTV allotments for each country, (2) a list of the technical parameters to be included in notifications, (3) the methodology to be used in evaluating proposed DTV facilities, and (4) lists of each country's accepted DTV facilities. This MOU supersedes an earlier MOU, signed April 2, 1997, in which the U.S. and Mexico agreed to work together to develop a list of second channels for DTV.

The full text of the Memorandum of Understanding has been placed on file at the International Bureau Reference Room located on the first floor of 2000 M St. N.W. Copies are available from International Transcription Service at (202) 857-3800 and can be downloaded from the FCC's International Bureau internet site at <http://www.fcc.gov/ib/pnd/agree>.

- FCC -

News Media contact: Rosemary Kimball at (202) 418-0500.
International Bureau contact: Larry Olson at (202) 418-2142.
Office of Engineering and Technology contact: Bruce Franca at (202) 418-2470.

